RAJYA SABHA

dnesday, the 3rd March, 1993/the 12th Phalguna, 1914 (Saka)

e House met at eleven of the clock.
Mr. Chairman in the Chair

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Derailment of Goods Trains

121. SHRI V. RAJESHWAR RAO: DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be ased to state:

a) whether it is a fact that the goods ins get derailed at the rate of one train day on an average;

b) if not, how many goods trains have ailed from 1st January, 1992 to 31st cember, 1992;

c) what are the reasons for such de- lments; and

d) what steps are being taken to pre- nt this?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE INISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. LENKA): (a) to (d) A statement is l on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

(a) No, Sir.

(b) 273.

(c) The main reasons for such derailments have been identified as follows:—

(i) Failure of track, sudden rail fracture and sinkage of track due to heavy rains, etc.

(ii) Defect in the mechanical equipment of the coach, wagon or locomotive like wheel, undergear or springs, etc.

i) Staff failure.

) Sabotage.

) Natural calamities and incidental causes.

(d) The steps being taken to eliminate such accidents include renewal and rehabilitation of overaged assets like track, bridges, rolling stock, etc. In addition inspection of track and examination of coaches, wagons and locomotives have been intensified. Ultrasonic testing of rails and axles are being resorted to identify fractures. Special emphasis is being laid on adherence to laid down procedures for reception to and despatch of trains at stations. Besides, maintenance and upkeep of signalling equipment is also being given utmost attention. Drivers are being monitored and counselled about their driving techniques. Intensive training of running, maintenance and operating staff is conducted.

SHRI V. RAJESHWAR RAO: I want to know what is the percentage of derailments due to sabotage and technical reasons.

SHRI K.C. LENKA: Sir, there are so many reasons for derailments. There is only 1.5 per cent derailment due to sabotage.

SHRI V. RAJESHWAR RAO: I would like to know whether the derailments of goods trains are declining or increasing day by day.

SHRI K.C. LENKA: Sir, due to safety performance, the percentage of goods trains derailment is declining day by day. Compared to 1991-92, it has declined by 17 per cent in 1992-93.

DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR: Sir, on the 24th of February when the Railway Minister laid the Railway Budget, he also supplied a small booklet, known as 'Safety Performance' In this booklet he has said that there are 13411 trains, out of which 7554 trains are passenger trains and 5857 goods trains. It means, there are 57 per cent passenger trains and 43 per cent goods trains. Now, while giving details of derailments the Minister has said that there were 444 derailments last year, out of which 273 were of the goods trains. If we see the statistical correlation, the explanation given by the Minister to my question

*The Question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri V. Rajeshwar Rao.

does not stand the test of statistics because for 57 per cent passenger trains the derailment is 39 per cent and for 43 per cent goods trains the derailment is 61 per cent.

SHRI PARMOD MAHAJAN: Do not suggest to the Minister that the percentage of derailment should be the same. He will start derailing passenger trains.

DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR: I am saying that the explanation which the Minister has given to my question is not corroborated by the statistics. The difference statistically is significant. So, my first supplementary is based on this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have only one supplementary.

DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR: Okey, part (a) of my supplementary is, since 72 per cent of the derailments of goods trains are taking place due to human error, that is error of the railway staff, I would like to know whether there are organised gangs of wagon-breakers and thieves, who are in collusion with the railway staff and causing these derailments. Since 72 per cent of the derailments of goods trains are due to the errors of the railway staff, is it a fact that these wagon-breakers in collusion with the railway staff get these derailments engineered and then break the wagons?

Part (b) of my supplementary is also related because the same train is getting derailed at the same spot, and the same employees are responsible. These are not my statistics. Their own publications show that on 21st January recently on the Delhi-Kanpur line one goods train got derailed twice at the same spot in 24 hours and four times in one week, that the same staff was responsible and that the wagons were found broken. So, I want to know whether there is an organised gang, number one, and, number two, whether they are monitoring this railway staff which is again and again responsible for the derailments.

SHRI AJIT P.K. JOGI: Synchronised derailments.

SHRI K.C. LENKA: Sir, there are 6,000 ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please, please, let him reply.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: The Minister has been derailed by the question. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, please go ahead.

SHRI K.C. LENKA: Sir, 6,000 goods trains are daily running. The hon. Member, Dr. Srikant Ramchandra Jichkar said that the passenger trains were more than the goods trains. Their number is more, but the volume of traffic running on the track so far as the goods trains are concerned, is high. So, the frequency of the derailment of the goods trains is more than that of the passenger trains because 6,000 goods trains daily we are running on 62,500 km. of track. So, that is the point so far as the derailments are concerned. In most of the derailments of the goods trains what I say is that the major reason is human failure, and that has been happening.

Secondly, about wagon-breakers, what we have to examine is that 1.5 per cent of the derailments of the goods trains are due to sabotage, but besides sabotage there are accidents also. Accidents things, natural calamities mean that sometimes some stone has come on the line somewhere. That also causes derailment of the train. That is also one of the reasons. And 5.5 per cent of the derailments of the trains are due to the failure of the tracks, and 8 per cent are due to mechanical failures. So, these are the reasons for the derailments of the goods trains.

DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR: Sir, the hon. Minister has not replied to my two supplementaries. He has given the same statistics which I gave to the House from the same booklet.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So, what is wrong

with it? It should be authentic.

DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR: No, no. That was the background of my question. He has not replied to my supplementaries (a) and (b). What about the wagon-breakers and what about the monitoring of the railway staff, which we feel....

MR. CHAIRMAN: He has mentioned in reply to the main question what steps he is taking for monitoring it.

SHRI K.C. LENKA: I have already mentioned it.

DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR: Sir, he has not answered about wagon-breakers' collusion with the railway staff and about what mechanism he is implementing for the monitoring of the staff.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He is answering.

SHRI K.C. LENKA: Sir, we are periodically monitoring and developing our safety mechanism, due to which the derailments have been minimised. So far as wagon-breakers are concerned, there is no information at the moment that due to wagon-breakers there were derailments...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: What about the same train being derailed at the same time?

SHRI K.C. LENKA: Sir, the hon, Member is a very very very learned person. He knows it. I know him personally. He is M.A. in ten subjects...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Has his being a learned man anything to do with the railway accidents?

SHRI K.C. LENKA: For this particular question about the particular train meeting with accidents four times on the same track, I need a separate notice so that he gets a proper answer.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Obviously this is a mentally derailed train.

श्री लक्खीराम अग्रवाल: सभापति जी, माननीय मंत्री जी ने मालगाड़ियों का 1 जनवरी, 1992 से 31 दिसम्बर, 1992 तक 273 गाड़ियां पटरी उतरने का बताया है।

मैं, माननीय मंत्री जी से, पूछना चाहूंगा कि इसमें से चक्रधरपुर सैक्शन और बिलासपुर सैक्शन में कितनी मालगाड़ियां इस पीरियड में पटरी से उतरी है, या उनका इस 273 में से कितना प्रतिशित चक्रधरपुर सैक्शन और बिलासपुर सैक्शन में कितना प्रतिशत है।

SHRI K.C. LENKA: Sir, this was about the total number of derailments. Total derailments in 1985-86 was 588 while in 1991 it was 444. So, it has reduced. So far as information about the Chakradhar Section is concerned, there is no information with me at the moment ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI N.E. BALARAM: Last month there were three derailments on the railway line between Trivandrum and Ernakulam. The main reason was the failure of tracks. This issue was raised three months back at a conference convened by the Railway Minister, where all the MPs from Southern States were present. It was pointed out that on that line there was a regular failure of tracks and that there was no proper inspection and maintenance. When that issue was raised, the Minister gave some assurance saying that he would look into the matter. Now, last month there were three derailments in three areas at a distance of 40 miles. That means derailments are continuing. So, I would like to urge upon the Minister once again to look into the matter so that in future derailments can be avoided in that area. Will he look into the matter?

SHRI K.C. LENKA: Sir, I will supply the reply to that particular question of the hon. Member. But, so far as the track structure is concerned, we are constantly monitoring the track structure, which is upgraded day by day.

SHRI N.E. BALARAM: How do you monitor? I am telling you the facts once again. There is no inspection. When there is no proper inspection, how do you monitor?

SHRI K.C. LENKA: If in any section there is no proper inspection, I would request the hon. Member to give me the information about it and I will look into the matter.

SHRI N.E. BALARAM: It was given at the Conference last time. He said he would look into it. So, what is the meaning of it? That is a repetition. He must do it. What is the use of making a request in such a situation?

SHRI MOTURU HANUMANTHA RAO: The Minister has consoled himself by saying that most of the derailments are due to personnel faults. The question is that on the all-India pattern these derailments may be less than the previous year, but they are not to console themselves on that account. Particularly in the South-Central Railway last year at the time of the Budget I had pointed out those things. This year also it is happening. I would like to know how many derailments have taken place between Visakhapatnam and Vijayawada last year, from January onwards? Since derailments have become frequent, people are getting scared. Derailments are there not only of goods trains, but also of passenger trains. So, I would request the hon. Minister to give me figures in regard to the derailments between Vishakhapatnam and Vijayawada.

SHRI K.C. LENKA: Sir, so far as the South Central Railway is concerned, there has been a lot of decrease in the number of derailments of goods trains. In 1990-91 there were 41 derailments of goods trains, and in 1991-92 the number came down to 36. As regards derailment of passenger trains, I have no information; I will supply it to the hon. Member.

SHRI MOTURU HANUMANTHA RAO: Sir, it is mentioned in the newspapers as "Bhayam, bhayam!" which means that people are scared of all these derailments and here the Minister is satisfying himself with this short reduction. ..*(Interruptions)*..

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is a serious matter. The Minister has said that he is looking into it. It is, of course, a very high incidence of derailment.

SHRI K.C. LENKA: Sir, we are giving high priority to this problem now. We are giving high priority to monitoring, and we are giving high priority to renewal of tracks in the Eighth Five-Year Plan.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: He says that the number of derailments has reduced from 41 to 36. ..*(Interruptions)*..That is the argument he is making. If he could say, "Yes, it is reduced to zero", then I can understand it. ..*(Interruptions)*..

SHRI K.C. LENKA: Nobody can say in the House that there will be no accidents and the number will come down to zero.

..*(Interruptions)*..

SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA: Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister about the quantum of the loss suffered by the railways in terms of money due to such derailments during 1992-93 on account of loss of human lives as also on account of dislocation of express passenger trains due to the derailment of goods trains. Is it a fact that such derailments of goods trains are caused due to lack of proper maintenance of track and wagons and lack of automatic signalling equipment and, if so, what steps are being taken to ensure proper maintenance and provision of adequate automatic signalling equipment?

SHRI K.C. LENKA: Sir, so far as loss is concerned, I need a separate notice. Regarding derailments I have already mentioned the main reasons for them — failure of track, sudden rail fracture and sinkage of track due to heavy rains, etc., defect in the mechanical equipment of the coach, wagon or locomotive like wheel, undergear or springs, etc., staff failure, sabotage and natural calamities and incidental causes.

SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Sir,

while answering part (c) of the question, the hon. Minister has pointed out some of the causes of derailment. Now I would like to know whether the Government has identified as to in how many cases derailments have been due to defects in mechanical equipment of coach, wagon or locomotive like wheel, etc., etc., and how many derailments have been caused by staff failure and how many by sabotage. I want to know whether the Government has identified all these causes and what measures have been taken up till now to rectify all such defects.

SHRI K.C. LENKA: Yes, the Government has already identified the causes. Eight per cent of the derailments are due to mechanical failure. I have already said that 1.5 per cent of these derailments happen due to sabotage.

Disinvestment of ONGC

*122. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to disinvest a part of its stake in the Oil and Natural Gas Commission;

(b) if so, what are the factors that weighed with Government for taking such a decision throwing open the sensitive area to MNCs;

(c) why all these years ONGC could not make a turn around even in the exploitation of natural gas for domestic and industrial purposes despite huge plan allocations and unrestricted autonomy; and

(d) whether Government are aware of the demoralising effect this disinvestment decision has brought about in the functioning of the Public Sector Units?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPT. SATISH SHARMA): (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

(a) and (b) In order to facilitate mobilisation of additional resources for the projects of ONGC, Government have, *inter-alia*, decided divestiture of 20% of the equity of the proposed company after Oil and Natural Gas Commission is converted into a Public Limited Company, under the Companies Act, 1956. However, majority interest and thereby control would be retained by Government in the new company.

(c) ONGC has made significant efforts to develop and utilise domestic natural gas and its gas supplies have increased from a level of 2.67 MMSCMD in 1980-81 to about 37 MMSCMD at present.

(d) No such instances have come to the notice of the Government. There would be no reason for any demoralisation as the decision entails greater autonomy for the new company and ability to mobilise greater resources for larger activities.

SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Sir, I fully appreciate and understand the reasons leading to the policy of disinvestment, which will also help the entry of private enterprises to compete with the monolithic public sector which has not lived up to the dreams and expectations of our late leader, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. It has been reported that indigenous oil production will not exceed 37 to 38 million tonnes as against the projected demand of 78 million tonnes, which means an additional import bill of 1.5 billion dollars. The ONGC's production fell down steeply: from 33 million tonnes in 1989-90, it has touched the lowest figure of 25.5 million tonnes in 1992-93. Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the steep fall in the production is because of the non-availability of oil or the inefficiency of the ONGC which has failed to exploit our natural resources. If so, what steps are being taken by the Government to normalise the production?

CAPT. SATISH SHARMA: Sir,